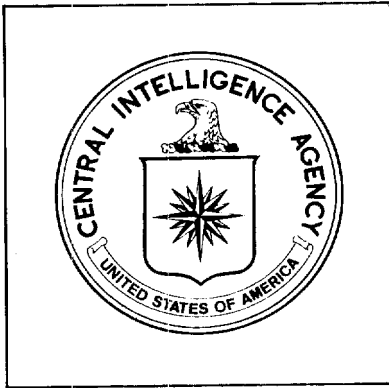


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128

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

Contents

25X1D

North Yemen: Political Pot Boiling Again . . . 3

Jan 6, 1975

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

25X1D

Approved For Release 2001/07/30 : CIA-RDP79T00865A000100070001-4

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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North Yemen

Political Pot Boiling Again

North Yemeni political activity, muted in recent weeks, is likely to heat up with the return of former prime minister Hasan al-Amri to Sana on January 4. Al-Amri has been living in exile in Cairo since he was removed as prime minister in 1971 after he murdered a Yemeni citizen.

According to rumors circulating in Sana, al-Amri is to become chairman of the ruling command council, and its current head, Colonel Ibrahim al-Hamdi, is to step down to the deputy position. The same rumors indicate that Prime Minister Muhsin al-Ayni will be ousted as part of the political turnover.

We believe it unlikely that Colonel Hamdi's power will be diminished. He appears to have steadily consolidated his position in recent months. It is unlikely that he would voluntarily give up power or suffer such a loss without a struggle.

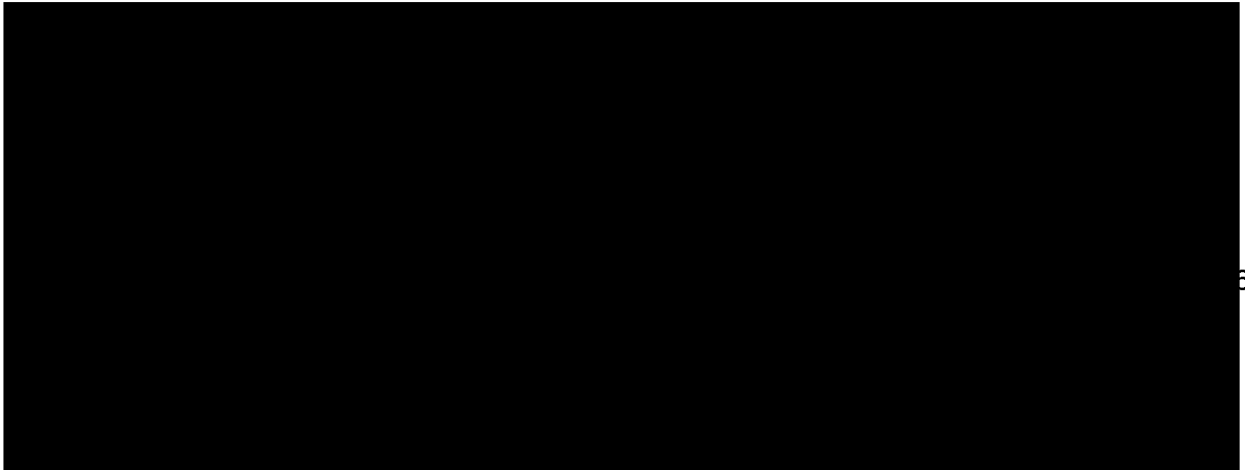
(Continued)

Jan 6, 1975

3

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There is a serious question of al-Amri's acceptability to leftist elements in the country, whatever position he might be offered. He is a strong rightist and probably acceptable to conservative tribal sheikhs, even though he moved harshly against dissident tribes in 1971. If al-Amri returns to a position of power, the government will probably crack down on the Iraqi and South Yemeni supported leftists in the country as well as adopt a tougher policy toward South Yemen. In any case, al-Amri's return to North Yemen could produce a leftist reaction and disrupt the political situation. (SECRET)

25X1A



Jan 6, 1975

4

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